592 /30 cont'd/
594 seems to be more prevalent. It is not uncommon to see a Miao
596 family of eight to ten people, of three generations, father, son, grandson, living in a single thatched hut.

592 A family at the least consists of a man, his wife, and their
593 children. The father is, of course, the head of the family, who is
562 in charge of the affairs of the whole family. Every member of the family must obey his directions in everyday family work, and even in personal behavior each receives his concern. For instance, in the
582 marriage of sons and daughters, although free choice as the basis of
584 marriage is permitted in many cases, there are also many marriages which are arbitrarily determined by the head of the family. In the latter case, the children have no way of raising objections. Generally, the father in a Miao family is more powerful and respected than he is in a Li family.

593 There is a big difference in another aspect, the position of the
171 man and woman in the family. The Miao women are submissive. From what I have heard, this is completely different from the manner of the Li women. It is easy for a Miao husband to give orders to his wife while the Li husband is unable to do so. However,
596 it is rather strange that polygamy is completely forbidden among the Miao. Regardless of whether he is wealthy or not, or whether he has a son /31/ or not, a Miao husband can never take a second wife (i.e. concubine), unless his first wife has died. For instance, the Miao headman, Lu Tsun-ying, is generally considered to be wealthy and influential. He is already fifty years old and is still without an heir, but he has no intention of taking a concubine. We have not yet been able to point out clearly the background which has created this kind of rule. The following two points may serve as possible explanations. In the first place, the Miao have only a
[582] limited area of land, and it is hard for them to make a living on it. Forbidding concubinage may serve to avoid the problem of overpopu-
[582] lation. Secondly, they have strictly followed the rule of marriage within the group (i.e., a Miao may only marry a Miao). But the entire Miao population is not very large. In order to maintain a balance between the male and female population, monogamy must

4:Mickey E-5 (1940-?)1947 AE5 Miao AE5

593 [875] eat. The older nephew was teacher in the *lien pao* school when it was in session. The son acted for the old man in business matters, though subject to his father's decisions. The oldest nephew became head of the family after the old man's death and the second nephew took his old sitting room. I got a Chinese newspaper, which I shared with the teacher and his uncle, a keen old man with remarkably able opinions and quite a bit of knowledge of the world, which he liked to discuss at length.

The son's first wife spoke less Chinese than any of the other women of the family except the old man's first wife, who spoke almost none. They were, therefore, harder to get to know well, but the more I saw of them the better I liked them. Others I found a bit trying because they wanted so much for their immediate family or close relatives, and I am almost certain that the married daughter of the old man or the second nephew's wife took for herself two large sheets of mine. I never learned to share everything I owned as they did within the family group.

The wife of the second nephew made up for him in spunk and energy. She did a great deal for me, often prepared dishes to eat with the rice and would then bring over her own large portion of rice and eat at least half of what she had prepared of the dishes, for which I had furnished the ingredients from market. Once I bought a piece of cloth in market, for which she hinted so strongly that I had to give it to her. She insisted upon doing my washing, brought me firewood and water, but in the end expected a handsome reward. Generally speaking, all of them wanted everything for their immediate family and close relatives. They showed no community spirit in the sense of sharing good things with others who were remotely related to them. Her oldest daughter, twelve, was very like her. In fact, she seemed to be a model Miao girl, pleasant, capable, and able to do only a little less than the older women in both field work and embroidery. The second daughter was made responsible for two baby sisters and seemed to have a very jolly time with them, doing everything for them, after they were past the age when they required their mother much of the time, amusing them and teaching

855

4:Mickey E-5 (1940-?) 1947 AE5 Miao AE5

The bridal party spent that afternoon getting to the groom's village. At the village they played and sang all night. The next day the bride's party was feasted by his relatives. On one occasion I saw, feasting took place about noon. The bride's party sat on two rows of benches facing one another on one of the threshing floors. The food was set in bowls on planks between them by women of a related household. 585

On the third day, after another night of singing and playing the *lu sheng*, the bride and her attendants returned to her village, accompanied by the groom, who brought gifts of meat and rice and spent the night there. When the bride and her attendants left the groom's village to return, the women of the village accompanied them, some stopping at the entrance to the village and some going a little way. At a point where the bride and her attendants were about to disappear from view they stopped and sang a song antiphonally with the other groups. Then they went on and the nearer group rushed after them to watch them out of sight. When they left they were still in ceremonial array, except for plainer blouses. They reached home dead tired and slept from the time of their arrival until the next day.

Tso Chia. After a girl was married she returned at once to her parents' home, where she stayed, except for short periods in her husband's home, during the busy seasons and at feasts, until she was pregnant. Before the child was born she went to live in his home permanently. When the first child was twenty-two days old girls from the mother's village were invited to "drink wine" in honor of the event. They called this "*tso k'ai.*"[2] Some said it was the same as "*tso chia.*"[3] Others said that it was the same as "*ch'ih chiu*" or "*tso chieh*"[4] — a time of rejoicing, calling, of course, for wine in abundance. Among the local Chungchia this was a combination of "*man yüeh*"[5] and the setting up of the permanent household in the groom's home. The bride's village sent with the guests at this feast among the Chungchia a red cupboard and clothing. 591 852 593

[4] This means to drink wine, or to attend a feast.
[5] The first month feast — The feast also given by the Chinese when a baby is a month old.

593 From this time on the life of a Miao bride varied little from that of other Cowrie Shell Miao women. It was not much easier, though a little more full of good things, perhaps, if her husband's family was large and well-to-do and she fitted into it well.

766 **Death and Burial.** When a very small child died, a little coffin was made by the men of the family, but there was no ceremony at the house, other than the singing of the lament by the mother and girls and women of closely related households. During the night when the second grandson of the old man died I heard the mother going all through the village singing the lament, beautifully and sadly as if in real grief. The child was buried next day but I do not know where nor with what ritual. They made it plain that they considered it a strictly family affair and I respected their wishes. The family was genuinely distressed and reasonably so, for he was an exceptionally intelligent child and the only remaining grandson. Moreover, not long before the father had been taken away by soldiers. The mother seemed beside herself for several days, calling another child by her child's name. The old man wept, then apologized for his "weakness." They did not tell the father, for they feared he would make an effort to get back and so get into more trouble.

757 When the baby took ill the mother said it had a fever. I gave it a small dose of quinine and aspirin. She said she did not know of any other symptoms. But the next day they called in the shamaness and, as he lay on a pallet of straw by the fireplace, he showed unmistakable signs of dysentery. Two other children in the family had it at the same time, but recovered. When I learned they had dysentery, I gave the parents bismuth, but it is difficult to administer and they said the children would not take it. That night the baby developed meningitis and died.

764 535 The length of time given to activities and their elaborateness in connection with the death and burial of an adult depended upon the wealth and extent of relationship in the family, as well as the time of year at which the death occurred. I was not in the village

*A rectangle of brown "grass paper" with a de-

8: Graham E-5 (1921-1936) 1937 AE5 Miao AE5

836 On the second or third days of the second moon, at *tuan yang* 端陽, and on the sixth day of the sixth moon, men
837 and women and boys and girls go to market. There they make advances to each other and a boy or a man goes home with a girl or a woman. On the way or in her home they are likely to enjoy sexual intercourse. They may or may not be married people. If anybody in the home of the woman or girl objects, a quarrel ensues. Generally no trouble is made by the wife or husband of either of the actors. But sometimes a woman who has irregular sexual relations with men other than her husband objects to her husband's doing likewise and in rare cases she commits suicide. It is said that among the Ch'uan Miao there are no harlots, women who habitually sell themselves for money and depend on that for a living. Sexual relations are generally the result of love affairs.

837 At the *tso chai* 做齋 ceremony or the *ch'ao chien* 超薦
593 ceremony, or at the *hua t'an* ceremony, the host may bring out a bamboo stick and hang it up on his door and near it hang up an iron chain. Then he says, "You are my guests, old and young. If a wife or a husband causes trouble because of what his mate does I will not endure it." He implies that he will beat that person and if the person does not run away or desist he will chain that person up. Then those present quietly entice each other, without speaking a word. If a man entices a woman and she consents, they enjoy each other and nothing happens. If she refuses, he desists. The same principal holds if the woman makes the advances. The act of sexual intercourse may take place in the woods, in the house where the guests are being entertained, or in another house. Nothing is done by either a husband or a wife afterwards. It is thought by some that this custom has grown out of unhappy early marriages.

Women purposely dress as well as possible so as to look pretty and attractive to the opposite sex. They do not use face powder, but most of them do not need to for Nature has given them good complexions. Women who are popular with men are pretty or ready of speech or well dressed or good singers or have bright minds or have money. These are the qualities that attract the men. Men who are popular with the women are handsome, or mentally bright or good singers or good at playing the *liu shêng* and dancing, or have money. Wealth alone is not sufficient, although it makes a great difference, and generally but not always ability to work is
533 esteemed. It is said that the most potent music of all in making love is that made by blowing on tree leaves which has the advantage that audible words can be spoken by the musician.

[180 cont.]
796 and then hang out knots of scented rice straw, but no red peppers. These decorations are in expectation of a prosperous year.

After having celebrated "The Big Year" on the thirtieth day of the twelfth month and having decorated the door on the New Year's day, the Hua Miao and the Ch'ing Miao would remain at home to rest without doing any work. The food for the New Year was prepared in advance on a lucky day (dragon and [777] dog days are lucky), and it is not cooked again until another lucky day comes around. [181] So on New Year's day there is no kitchen drudgery as only pre-cooked meals are eaten. The [784] New Year's day being the first of the year, everything has to be auspicious and inhibitions are many. For instance, 1) no sewing is done by women at home; 2) nothing is taken into the house from outside; 3) no water is carried; 4) no knife is used; 5) no one is allowed to go barefooted and shoes must be worn; 6) no cursing is allowed; 7) no rapping on the wall is allowed; 8) the floor must not be swept; 9) no collection of debt is permitted. Besides, there are the proverbial "three days of liberty" when [527] parents would allow their sons and daughters unrestrained freedom [593] in the pursuit of recreation and happiness on the first, second and third days of the year. After this period the children once more submit themselves to parental restraint. On the first day of the year the old and young are clothed in new garments and have fun all day long. Only the Hsiung and Yang families 769 among the Ch'ing Miao have the custom of worshipping ancestors 796 in the evening. At the time of the sacrifice, the head of the family would spread a straw mat on the floor of the middle room or the side room and place on it incense and candles as well as three bowls of rice. In each bowl is pitched a piece of pork on a bamboo stick with three straw knots to represent the ancestors. In addition there are three bowls of beancurd and three pieces of tz'ŭ-pa [glutinous rice balls]. They call out aloud to ask their ancestors to pass the New Year with them. Then the male members of the family begin to kowtow in the order of their age. After the paper money is completely burned, they gather up the things on the straw mat. The rice straw and the bamboo

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Miao AE5
Shan-Thai AL3

alternating with the girls, describes in verse, to the accompaniment of *Kènes*, their possessions, their accomplishments, or their virtues. Formal offers of marriage then follow, and according to eye-witnesses of the custom, the metrical form in no way inhibits the most banal cataloguing of articles to be included in the marriage contract.

We were still eating when the chief's messenger came back with the only dog on offer. It was a poor forlorn animal, suffering probably from some wasting disease, and an enormous price was demanded.

As there was no dog to be had from these intermediaries, there was nothing for it but to go to the source itself, even if it meant another stiff climb on foot. Instead of turning left, therefore, at the junction of the main road to Luang Prabang, we took the right-hand fork towards Xien Khouang, which, although it led us out of our way, went right through the heart of Meo country in Laos. Shortly after, we came up with a Meo family, who were struggling up a hill loaded down like beasts of burden with their possessions. The Meos threw down their bundles and looked us over with puzzled amusement. One of them, who wore pigtails to show that he was the head of the family, came over, cut the choice centre out of a sugar cane he was carrying and presented it to us, roaring with laughter. This was typical Meo conduct. The Meo is grateful to strangers for amusing him with their clownish faces and ridiculous clothes, and his first impulse is to look round for something to give them. Shouting with joy, the children leaped into the car and were cuffed out again by their father. The woman who, if a Thai or a Laotian, would have stood apart with downcast eyes, bent down to examine Dupont's sandals. She wore several pounds in weight of solid silver jewellery round her neck and had had her head recently shaved.

Meo finery at its best is the most extravagantly colourful in Indo-China. The women are stiff with embroidery and heavy silver necklaces and chains, and are half-extinguished by enormous turbans that look like Chinese lanterns. But this family was in its

[163 cont.]
631 government with the functions of an administrator, with the title
648 of "t'ou-sseu" (administrator of barbarian country). This personage has retained a certain moral influence over the neighboring Tonkinese regions but naturally has no administrative authority over these populations.

The "Méo" settled in Tonkin are subject to Annamese law and amenable to the various native and European courts. Most of their
[627] differences are adjusted on the spot, according to the special customs of each tribe. When there is truly no means of settling the affair, the case is brought before higher jurisdiction.

[164] The "Méo" greatly dread the European courts, not so
147 much because of the severity of their sentences, but because these
648 courts most frequently sit in the towns situated at low altitude, where the "Méo" are unable to live. It has quite frequently happened to us to have to judge certain "Méo," the importance of whose crimes exceeded our competence. Upon the announcement of their being sent before the court of the resident of Laokay (altitude: 90 meters) the defendants threw themselves at our feet, saying: "Kill me at once, for if you send me to Laokay, I am sure to die there."

The "Méo" family is not united by as strong ties as the fami-
593 lies of the other groups. Here again is found another manifestation
866 of the spirit of independence of the "Méo," who accept no constraint, even that of the paternal authority when it becomes too annoying. Boys and girls are raised at random, without control and without advice, obeying freely the dictates of their will and their instincts. They part company with their family when it pleases them. However, one son always remains in the paternal household to keep up the cultivation of the fields belonging to the family.

769 Ancestral worship, which constitutes elsewhere so strong a family tie, is observed by the "Méo" in the most summary fashion.

Upon the death of the father, it is the mother who remains head
768 of the family and proprietress of the various belongings, real and personal. When the mother dies in her turn, the personal property
[428] (money, utensils, animals, crops) are divided among the male children. The eldest son or that one of the sons who remains settled in the paternal home becomes head of the family and cultivates the

291 The second type known in Tonkin is that of the Embroidered Meo, who are sometimes called Hoa Meo. They are subdivided into two groups, Red Meo (in the Meo tongue, Mong Len), and "Meo of the comb" (in the Meo tongue, Mong Soa). The costume of Embroidered Meo women consists of a short skirt embroidered in five colors, a jacket open on the bosom in the style described above but trimmed with embroidered borders and armbands, and without the sailor collar, a blue apron, and enormous leggings, which make the leg look like an elephant's foot.

The turban is rather characteristic. It is formed of a long string wound around the head, together with the hair hanging down, which is bound together and carefully gathered up on the head. The jewelry is similar to that of the White Meo women.

/136/ The third variety of the Meo ethnic group is the Black Meo (in the Meo tongue, Mong Du). Among them the women's costume consists of a skirt as pleated and short as that of the White Meo, but of black material, a dark blue jacket with a border of an insipid light blue and provided with double sleeves ending in light blue cuffs edged with white piping. This bodice comes to a point at the throat and reveals the upper part of the breast-covering which has horizontal embroidered stripes. It is held in at the waist by a light colored belt whose fringed ends fall down in back. A deep blue turban is knotted around the head rather irregularly. The leggings are not wrapped around the lower part of the leg. It is a kind of cylindrical gaiter of blue material which is put on like a stocking and is fastened by garters whose fringed ends are left hanging.

301 A wide necklace and the usual jewelry adorn this curious costume.

Section 5

Social Organization--The Family and the Tribe

593 The family is firmly established among the Meo. As among all the neighboring races, the authority of the father of the family is absolute within the home, and the wife is the first servant of her husband. She takes an active part in work in the fields, cares for her children, cooks for her household and for the animals, and still finds time to make all the articles of clothing for the entire household.

855 Children are brought up austerely. From their earliest years
857 they have to look out for the herds, then they are initiated into the

39: Bernatzik--43 E-5 (1936-1937) 1947 AO1 Thailand
AKha A04
Miao AE5

/30/

Chapter 5

Social Organization

a) Organization of the Family

A M 596 618 [611] Among the Meau as well as among the Akha, the family is organized strictly by father right. No esteem even similar to the consideration enjoyed by the parents is shown toward any other relative. In accordance with the organization by father right, descent is reckoned in the male line, and married women belong absolutely to the family of their husband, if he is already independent, or otherwise to the family of the father-in-law.

A M [614] M [775] The extent to which wives are absorbed in the new family group is shown by the fact that the married woman among the Meau not only loses every connection with the sib /Sippe/ from which she is descended, which is also the custom among the Akha, but also, after her death, her soul arises anew in the next child of her husband's family (cf. the chapter, "Religion and Magic," section on "Ideas about Death and the Soul").

M 596 618 [591] Adult unmarried sons always remain with their father; even married sons do not at first establish an independent family, but are regarded among the Meau as belonging, along with their wives and children, to the family of the father until they have completed their thirtieth year. Accordingly, they live in the paternal home up to this time, even though in a separate area, with their wives and children, and do not manage an independent household. Not until they have reached the aforementioned age do they have a right to build themselves a house and to establish an independent family.

M 593 618 /31/ According to Dhuraratsadorn (1), the Meau never

1. Page 167.

part from their sons, even if the latter are married. As my remarks show, this statement can be regarded as correct only

/31 const./
M 593 618 if it is qualified. On the other hand, the observations of the author named (2) agree with my data concerning the position of

2. Page 169.

the woman: "The parents' authority over their sons ends only at death, over the daughters on the day of their marriage. Even if the married daughter were to commit a crime, it would not be permissible for the parents to punish her, nor would they be responsible for the deed of their daughter."

A 884 [574] [556] [782] As among the Meau, the thirtieth year as the attainment of a man's majority also plays an important role among the Akha. It is therefore celebrated. Rich people slaughter several pigs on this occasion, and the guests, usually relatives and friends, are also served rice and liquor; among poor people everything is done on a correspondingly smaller scale. No

M [884] sacrifices, however, are offered in connection with the coming-of-age celebration.

A [589] Among the Akha the girls are regarded as being of age at the time of their marriage, and an unmarried girl is treated as a minor as long as she lives.

A 591 For the most part among the Akha, too, the married sons live in the house of their father for several years, although they are allowed to stay in a small sleeping house for the night (cf. the chapter, "Life in the Community," section on "Courtship and Betrothal"). Sometimes they may even build a house of their own immediately, but with the consent of the father.

A [589] [884] The unmarried sons remain in the paternal home until they reach their majority, but there are also exceptions, for the father may permit an unmarried son to make himself independent even before he comes of age.

M 597 608 Aside from natural kinship, kinship through adoption or blood brotherhood is recognized among the Meau.

/79 cont./

A M 868 The small child is first taught how to speak, beginning with the words for father and mother. Later comes the simple housework, and only then the aforementioned more difficult spheres of work. For the latter the parents on the one hand select those children who exhibit special talents for the one or the other sphere; on the other hand, the educators and parents naturally seek to train the children in those crafts which they themselves as teachers and models have mastered extraordinarily well. One Meau father, for instance, who was an excellent hunter, said to me: "I would have liked to make a hunter out of my oldest boy, but he is only interested in my smithy.

A M 867 869 Besides these things which are required to master the material aspects of life, the educators and parents also instruct the children in religion and medicine, since this is not the business of the shaman, as well as manners and good behavior, which is very important in view of the traditional politeness of the Meau! In short, education includes everything that will enable the child to master life later on and to become a respected member of the community. For the rest, all the wishes of the children are complied with as far as possible. To be M [868] sure, among the Meau they are not trained to dance, but they are not prevented from dancing.

A M 861 From earliest childhood punishment and reward are used as a means of education. Disobedient children are reprimanded, and if this does not help, they get a beating, along with references to their duties, up to the age of eight, as parents explained to me. Actually I never saw adults actually beat a child. As a reward, on the other hand, a father may carve a small crossbow for his eight-year-old son, or, among the Meau, ask the blacksmith to make a small gun for his well-behaved son.

A M 593 858 The children are brought up remarkably well. They obey promptly, and one rarely sees it happen that a child has to be punished. The children are treated equitably, but there are always special favorites. As a rule, it is the ailing or weak upon whom /80/ the affection of the parents is obviously bestowed, or upon the youngest, who naturally are also the weakest. The older children do not mind this, and siblings are generally not jealous at all as soon as they have

/80 cont./

A M 593 858 [152] reached an age when they can think for themselves. Jealousy also seems to play no great role among the adults; at any rate, among the Meau I could not find any manifestation of this trait. Meau parents are very loving toward all their children and, as was pointed out, regard them as their most precious possession.

A M 515 593 I repeatedly had the opportunity to observe how wives delouse their husbands while the latter were simultaneously performing this charitable act on their children (Ill. 62).[1] The parasites that they caught were placed between the thumb nails and cracked with pleasure. It was a picture of a family idyl!

M 593 [595] 425 752 270 185 614 [736] The love of the chief of the Meau for his wives and his children was always apparent. Concerning this, I noted in my journal: "He never disposes of their property without consulting them. If they are sick, he is meticulous in providing them with everything they need, even with opium." I have asked many Meau parents what their goal was in rearing their children. In the plans they mentioned, the idea of security was decidedly secondary, as is only natural. After all, the sib takes care of its members, and even if later on a person should survive all the other members of his sib, he would, if it came to the worst, place himself as an unfree person under the protection of an existing powerful sib (see the chapter, "Social Organization," the section on "Organization of the Family"). Of the eight persons whom I asked about this, only one made a remark in which one could see the idea of security implied, but more as referring to himself. He was a chief with three wives and many children. He said to me: "Yes, now I am well off; I am rich and have many children who work for me. But when I was young, things were different. I was all alone with my first wife; we were poor and had to work hard, and yet we were hardly able to make a living, and we often had to go hungry."

M 185

M [858] The educational ideals of the Meau, which became manifest from the answers to my questions on the subject, differed according to the individual talents of the parents. Aside from that, however, they did not differ essentially among the two sexes. /Colored Pl. I appears here on an unnumbered page./

[1] [See cat 116, P450-ANALYST]

/98 cont./

584 she becomes pregnant. In both cases, the parents of the girl
[83C] will immediately withdraw their opposition.

583 It also happens in practice that the young people disregard all formalities and begin with cohabitation without consulting their parents. In this case, too, the parents of the girl can do nothing but belatedly approve of the accomplished fact.

584 When one considers all the various ways, it is apparent
593 that the girl's parents cannot assert their will against that of the daughter. The father of the young man, on the other hand, into whose sib and, in most cases, household community the girl is to be received, can exert extensive influence upon the decision of his son. If the father or head of the family does not like the girl, he can ultimately give the refusal of the ancestors as a pretext, and no son will dare to undertake anything against their will.

583 In contrast to my observations, Lajonquière reports of the
584 Meau in Indochina, as does Abadie (1) in almost the same words:

1. Page 168.

"It happens that marriages are concluded against the will of the parents. In this case the young people flee and, if they are found, pay an indemnity to the father of the girl. A small
[574] feast is celebrated, and everything is settled."

584 Marabail (2) makes the following statements on this

2. Page 459.

subject: "If a Meau wants to marry, he tells his father, without asking him for permission, for he is completely free. The father then sends two friends to the house of the girl's father. When they arrive, they plant two incense sticks in the ground in front of the door and light them. The master of the house then comes out and asks what they want. He listens to them,
[574] invites them to his room, and gives them something to drink. This is the sign that he has accepted the offer. As soon as the

AKha A04
Miao AE5

/106 cont./ The
A 585 daughter is provided with new clothing, a beautiful cotton
585 blanket, and a chopping knife for the celebration by her parents;
583 the parents, however, withhold the rich silver ornaments that
[301] she wore as a girl, for it is up to the husband to provide ornaments for his wife. If the bride's parents are wealthy, however, and want to do something more for their daughter, they slaughter a pig, pack the head and the two hind legs in a carrying basket, and give all this to the daughter to take along on the way while the rest of the meat remains in the house of the girl's parents and is eaten there.

A 585 The bride is called for by the emissaries of the bridegroom and is solemnly led to the dwelling of her father-in-law. The union of the young couple does not take place immediately
A [784] after the wedding, but only after thirteen days. A religious
[776] taboo is involved here, and the Akha believe that if it is violated the spirits would take revenge. After this period the
[343] young couple meet at night in a small house built for this pur-
[591] pose in the vicinity of the large dwelling house. During the day, however, the young people stay in the house of the father of the young husband, in whose community they live.

A [837] After the wedding no other man but the husband has any rights whatever to the wife with regard to sex.

A /107/ Among the Akha, too, poor people are usually
595 monogamous; only chiefs or very wealthy men keep several
[554] wives, five or six at the most. Polygamy therefore likewise
[583] prevails among the Akha. Other forms of marriage, such as
[837] trial or temporary marriage, polyandry or group marriage, as well as promiscuity in marriage, are unknown.

M 593 Among the Akha as well as among the Meau the wife is
[585] the property of the husband. No marriage contract is concluded, and no other rights are guaranteed to her. The husband can
A [593] even beat his wife, but my informant cautiously added to this information: "If she will stand for it." I learned among the Meau that this is by no means an empty phrase. One day a
M [123] young, strong woman about twenty-two years old, with whom we had become friends, came weeping into our camp. She

AKha AO4
Miao AE5

/107 cont./

M 593 123 had had a dispute with her husband and had fled for a few days to the house of her parents, who did not want to let her go again because they were sick and urgently needed their daughter as a worker. They wanted the daughter and the son-in-law to live with them a while. The latter, however, did not approve of this at all and heaped reproaches upon his wife. When I sent my interpreter to the husband, a young man bearly eighteen years old, in order to get his version of the story, he complained bitterly and said: "This woman is too strong for me. If we have a quarrel, she beats me! Look, you are big and strong; you could beat her. Would you not like to marry her?"

M [622] [627] With the help of the chief the dispute was finally settled in the peaceable manner of the Meau: the young woman returned to her husband, but from now on was allowed to help her parents with the work as often as they wished.

M 593 595 [177] [606] The position of young Meau wives has been strongly influenced by the Chinese and from our point of view is not very enviable. She has to show unquestioning obedience, first of all to her mother-in-law, secondly to her own husband, and thirdly to her father-in-law. If her husband has already married several wives, she must also obey all of them, as has already been mentioned. The only prospect she has is that eventually, when her husband has built his own house /108/ and the other wives who preceded her have died, she may occupy the coveted position of the nă thǒ. As soon as her husband has

M [606] built his own house, the position of the young wife improves, for at that moment her obligation to obey her mother-in-law ceases. In view of the aforementioned compatibility of the Meau within the family community, however, the members of a household community generally get along very well. Unhappy wives are rare. I am inclined to say much rarer than in Europe. The daily work required in the struggle for survival leaves the people little time to worry about superfluous matters.

A 595 [606] [422] Among the Akha, although the mother-in-law does not play such an important role in the life of the young woman, the first and therefore the chief wife of a husband enjoys all the more authority. All the wives wedded later must obey her unquestioningly; all the household furnishings, and sometimes

39: Bernatzik--450 E-5 (1936-1937) 1947 AO1 Thailand
Miao AE5

/Opposite p. 331./

142
291
302
515
576
593

Ill. 62. Family idyl of the Meau. Delousing as a pursuit while affectionately being together.